(IJIRA) Kolkata and Institute of Jute Technology (IJT) Kolkata.

(iii) Encouraging and subsidising participation of manufactures of geo-textiles in national and international fairs.

(iv) Sponsoring Pilot Rural Roads Project for standardising the specifications for the use of jute geo-textiles in construction of rural roads under the Prime Minister's Gramin Sadak Yojana jointly with the National Rural Roads Development Agency, Ministry of Rural Development and the Central Road Research Institute, New Delhi.

(v) Making technical presentations on Jute Geo Textiles to the concerned construction agencies and Departments of different State Governments and various organisations under the Central Government.

(vi) Jute Geo Textiles products are also exhibited in important congregations and seminars organised by the Indian Geotechnical Society, the Indian Roads Congress, the Central Board of Irrigation and Power etc.

Export of garment industry

1690. SHRI CHO. S. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the total export of the Garment Industry during the current financial year;

(b) whether there is any increase/decrease in the performance of this sector;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government are considering giving additional export benefits to boost the export of garments; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) to (c) As per latest available Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI AND S) data, exports of readymade garments during the period April-July 2003 have announced to US$ 1593.0 million as compared to export

of US$ 1758.7 MILLION DURING THE CORRESPONDING PERIOD OF 2002, SHOWING A DECLINE OF 9.4%.

(d) and (e) Government has been taking a number of measures, from time to time, to boost the exports of textiles including readymade garments. Some of the important initiatives are:

(i) The Government has de-reserved the woven segment of readymade garment from the SSI sector. It has also raised the SSI investment limit for knitted segment to Rs. 5 crores.

(ii) The Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS) has been made operational from 1-4-1999 to facilitate the modernisation and upgradation of the sector.

(iii) Weaving, processing and garment machinery, which are covered under TUFS, have been extended the facility of accelerated depreciation at the rate of 50%. Cost of machinery has also been reduced through Fiscal Policy measures. This further encourages modernisation.

(iv) With a view to making fabric production competitive, the custom duty on shuttleless looms has been brought from 15% to 5%.

(v) National Institute for Fashion Technology (NIFT), its six branches and Apparel Training & Design Centres (ATDCs) are running various courses/programmes to meet skilled manpower requirements of textile industry especially apparel in the field of design, merchandising and marketing.

(vi) Facilities by way of eco-testing laboratories have been created to enable exporters to get the garments/textiles pre-tested for conforming to the requirements of importing countries.

(vii) The Government has launched a centrally sponsored scheme titled "Apparel Park for Export Scheme" for imparting focused thrust for setting up of apparel manufacturing units of international standards at potential growth centres and to give fillip to exports.

(viii) For upgrading infrastructure facilities at important textile centers, a scheme "Textile Centre Insfrastructure Development Scheme" (TCIDS) has been launched.